2: Jochelson E-5 (1884-1902) 1933 Yakut

selves as the offspring of the mythical Omogoi-bai, in spite of the fact that they originate from his daughter, who married a Tatar or a Buryat.

To the end of the eighteenth century, there remained in vogue among the Yakut the custom of concession of wives. Formerly the bridegroom lived permanently in the house of his father-in-law, but in more recent times he lived there only for a definite period.

The *kalym*, or bride-price, replaced the system of marriage by capture. The origin of the *kalym* may be seen in the simulated enmity of the mother-in-law and the son-in-law.

A matriarchal system presupposes looseness of sex relations. The chastity of girls in rich families is not a question of morality but of *kalym* The *kalym* for a widow or a girl who has had children is low. In the case of a widow, the belief in the right of the deceased husband may limit the number of wooers. A girl with a child, however, is sometimes preferred as a guaranty against barrenness which the Yakut dislike. In Yakut tales, the guest does not ask, "Where shall I sleep?", but, "Where do you put your guests?" and then they are shown to the beds of the girls. This is a form of hospitable hetaerism.

As the ancient Yakut had no written records, we know very little of their former life and particularly of their internal organization. Our information may be summarized in the following.

A household or yard was called *yal;* a group of individuals, who formed a family, as well as each member of the group, was called *körgön*. The family consisted of blood relatives as well as of relatives by marriage: sons-in-law, wives (polygamy), adopted children, laborers, and slaves of both sexes. When the Yakut polygamist had several wives, he had several *yals*.

At the head of the family was the *aga*, meaning primarily "elder in age" and then "father." All the people of the household were regarded as and called by him "my children," "my sons or my daughters." Among these were included not only his own children, but also all relatives by blood and marriage, by adoption, by purchase (slaves), and any other dependents, as war captives. The *aga* continued to rule as long as he preserved his physical and mental abilities. According to a Yakut tradition, aged parents and also sick and crippled people, unable to work, were doomed to die and were even buried alive after three days of abundant entertainment.

Trostchansky, who lived as a political exile among the Yakut for about twenty years, characterizes them as egoistical utilitarians.[1] He

[1] Trostchansky, V. F., Notes on the Yakut of the Yakutsk District (*Memoirs, Imperial Society for Archaeology, History, and Ethnography*, vol. 27, parts 2–4, Kasan, 1911, in Russian), 97.

says that aged people are not in favor; they are beaten by their own children and are often forced to leave their dwellings and to beg from house to house. They are not admitted by the rich and poor people force them to do hard work, like dressing skins (Figs. 17, 18), for every bit of food.

The Yakut look for brides for their sons not only outside of their clans (*us*, *nasleg*), but outside of the *ulus*, or union of clans. A girl, say the Yakut, is really a lot of aliens. This saying is reminiscent of the old time marriage by capture. Marriage is now also exogamic, but *kalym* (bride-price) is given in money, cattle, and other goods. Practically, the *kalym* may be regarded as an exchange of presents. What the parents of the bride receive from the parents of the bridegroom is almost equivalent to what they give her when she leaves their house. Often the bride carries with her cattle and goods of a greater value than her parents received that she may not be reproached by the bridegroom's relatives for bringing only a small dowry with her. The young bride remains under the protection of her clan and family. Many common law customs regulate disagreements and dissensions: If a young woman leaves her husband because she dislikes him, her dowry remains with him; but, if she accuses him of cruelties, relatives on both sides decide the matter. The Yakut do not like to appeal to the Russian courts.

We have previously mentioned the exogamic character of the Yakut marriages, but some other tendencies have been observed in the northern districts of Yakut Province. The few rich families endeavor to keep their horses, cattle, and grazing places within a certain group of families through marriage of close relatives, insofar as this is permitted by the Russian church. By special permission of a bishop, even cousins are permitted to marry. In one case, known to the author, a man lived with his niece, a marital relation forbidden by the Church, though his neighbors avoided mentioning this irregularity to strangers.

The old Yakut clan was governed by family representatives or a family council in which women very often played a conspicuous rôle. After the Russian conquest of Yakut Province, clan ties became less important and the family head more despotic.

The Yakut were warlike and blood vengeance between clans occurred very often, but reconciliation was often sought through payment of a ransom or by giving a girl in marriage, the best way to end hostilities. It was more difficult to compound assassinations within the clan. To kill the murderer would deprive the clan of another member and the punishment had to take the form of ransom, service, or public disapproval.

6: Sauer--127 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut
116, 585, 756, 583

"The ceremony of buying a wife is extremely formal and tedious. A young man who wishes to marry sends his friend to ask the consent of the bride's father, and what kalym (purchase) he demands; that is, how many horses and cattle, as also the quantity of raw meat, horse flesh, and beef, that he requires for treats and feasts: this they call kurim; half of the quantity is always given in presents to the bridegroom by the bride's father, and is called yrdy. The daughter's inclinations are always consulted; and, if she does not object, the kalym and kurim are stipulated."

9: Stadling--93-95 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut
116, 583

"The Yakuts marry early and, as a rule, have many children, few of whom, however, survive the age of early childhood. Marriage among them is a matter of business, though behind the cold formalities of the transaction there [94] may sometimes lurk warmer human feelings. To the father of the bride is paid a certain price (kalym), varying in amount according to circumstances. The kalym is considered as payment for the rearing and education of the girl. The purchase is done by the father of the bridegroom or his representative. The terms of payment as well as the marriage ceremonies in general vary; the [95] customs of the northern Yakuts differing from those of the people in the southern parts of the province."

12: Galitzin -- 148 N-2 (no date) 1853 Yakut
116, 261, 273, 583, 585

"Marriage is performed without any kind of ceremony. When a Yacoute wishes to obtain the hand of a girl, he must agree with the father respecting the price to be paid for her: this purchase money is called the kolim. The wedding, and the banquet which accompanies it, take place in the house of the father-in-law of the bridegroom, but at the expense of the latter. The rejoicings are prolonged twice twenty-four hours. During the kourourne (banquet) they drink a quantity of koumise, a kind of fermented beverage made with mares' milk; more rarely brandy distilled from corn, which is scarce and consequently expensive. They eat horse-flesh, beef, and moles, as dishes of the first course. As a second course, they serve on the table a dish filled with drippings. This is considered the most refined dainty. The khamiak, which is a large spoon, goes all round, and each guest drinks plentifully of the nectar. There are some gluttons among them, who, after having crammed their stomach with meat, are still capable of swallowing a hundred spoonfuls of melted fat. The bridegroom cannot take away his bride until the kolim has been wholly paid for; otherwise she continues to live with her father. Sometimes the debt is only discharged by instalments, paid at long intervals, and at each of these instalments the husband comes to spend a few days with his wife.

16: Great Britain Admiralty -- 168 [2] G-3 (no date) 1920 Yakut
116, 165, 583, 595, 854

"The marriage ceremony contains an exchange of gifts, the bridegroom brings kalym, the bride anna (dowry). When the Cossacks came, they found polygamy general, owing no doubt to the nomadic character of the people, the Yakut having a wife in every pasture; but this is not much practiced now, partly because the high price of the kalym is a deterrent, partly because girls die more frequently than boys in infancy, as they are not so carefully tended."

17: Erman--264 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut
116, 595, 583, 584

"At Delgeisk, an old Yakut told me many particulars respecting the present manners and customs of his people. 'Here in the neighbourhood of the Russians, every one contents himself with one wife; but, among the families of the northern tracts, polygamy is as prevalent as ever. The old custom is kept up in regard to what is called the kolùim, or the sum for which every Yakut buys his wife. This is usually a number of cattle, to the value of 200 or 300 roobles; but as the family of the man are not always in a condition to pay the stipulated amount at once, it is customary to affiance the boys already in their twelfth year. The betrothed girls may be visited in their parents' yurts by their intended husbands, but cannot be taken home by the latter till the payment of the kolùim is completed. The sum thus paid goes wholly to the father of the bride, who carries only a few presents with her to her new home. Matchmakers, male and female--the svàti and svàkhui of the Russians, are indispensable as witnesses in settling the price of the bride.'"

19: Kharuzin --45 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 428, 562, 583, 614

The brothers, excluding their sisters from inheritance of the paternal property, are nevertheless obliged to support their unmarried sisters, to concern themselves with giving them in marriage, and to provide them with dowries from the general property. Mr. Priklonski, however, (Tri goda v ÎAkutskoi oblasti [three years in the Yakutsk territory]. Zhivaîa Starina, 1890, pt. 3, p. 80). notes that the share of the daughters in the division of property upon the death of the father is equal to that of the brothers; this share goes to the brothers, for the support of the sisters.

That in effect it is the economic principle, in union with the blood principle, and not the fact of the grant of a dowry to a girl entering into marriage, that lies at the basis of the exclusion of women from the paternal inheritance, is demonstrated by the fact that the dowry itself does not in any way correspond to the shares which fall to the lot of the sons upon the death of the father. Mr. Pripuzov unfortunately communicates only extremely fragmentary and incomplete information concerning the size of the dowry, concerning the objects which go to make it up, and concerning the relation of the personal property of the girl, accumulated by her own labor, to the dowry given by her parents at the time of marriage.

19: Kharuzin -- 45-46 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut -1-2
116, 178, 421, 431, 583, 614

In the Sbornik obychnago prava Sibirskikh inorodtser (Compilation of the Customary Law of the Siberian Natives), issued by Mr. Samokvasov (pp. 221-22), reference is made to the rule of the Yakut customary law, whereby "the dowry is paid as compensation to the bridegroom and his relatives for the payment of the kalym ; the dowry is given in cattle, clothes and sometimes in money, amounting to one half of the stipulated kalym; the bride may not have a dowry valued at less that half the kalym, while a larger dowry, sometimes exceeding the entire kalym (which very rarely happens), depends upon the will of her parents." Mr. Sieroszewski also remarks that the payment made to the parents of the bride as well as the gifts presented to the relatives and match-makers by the bridegroom are subsequently returned to the bridegroom in the form of dowry and gifts. It is only the expenses connected with the reception and "other insignificant additional expenditures" that the bridegroom pays without being reimbursed. Unlike the kalym, the dowry does not constitute an indispensable element in marriage. Although the relatives of the bridegroom receive the bride rather coolly if she brings to her new household less than was anticipated, and although quarrels and lawsuits ensue if she brings a dowry smaller than agreed upon, in some cases the parents do not give any dowry even if they receive a considerable kalym. Public opinion censures such actions, but the mere fact that such actions take place gives support to the opinions of Mr. Sieroszewski that dowries are a comparatively late institution among the Yakuts; on the

other hand, this explains the fact that up to the present time, according to Mr. Pripuzov it was the custom in the Yakutsk region not to make arrangements concerning the dowry and that the size of the dowry depended completely on the good will of the parents. [46]

The return of the whole or a part of the kalym to the clan or family of the bridegroom is the ordinary source of the dowry; this practice develops principally in the period of decline of the custom of purchasing one's wife, when the formerly dominant custom of purchasing the bride gradually loses its inherent sense and continues to maintain itself through tradition. But the Yakuts of the locality investigated by Mr. Pripuzov apparently have not yet elaborated definite rules, regulating the size of the dowry: all depends on the will of the father, which carries us to that period of development of the dowry, when the latter did not yet constitute a stable institution, and was given by the parents out of a desire to better the position of the daughter given in marriage in her husband's clan group by the return of a part of the kalym, to dispose the strange clan group favorably toward the young woman. Obviously, in this form the dowry has nothing in common with a distribution to the girl of a part of the property of her kin group. Her family does not deprive itself of the smallest part of its own property: the marriage is consummated at the expense of the bridegroom, and the family of the bride only denies itself, and that often only to a certain extent, the acquisition of the property which is a product of the sale of the daughter into a strange clan.

19: Kharuzin --46-47 E-4 (no date) 1898 Yakut
116, 421, 428, 562, 583, 614

Neither Mr. Pripuzov, nor, as far as we know, any other investigators of the customary law of the Yakuts, have given us a clear answer to the question as to the relationship in which the personally earned property of the girl stands to her dowry. Is this personal property.. [47]..combined with the dowry given by the parents, or does it form a separate type of female personal ownership among the Yakuts? We do not know. As concerns the dowry given by the parents at the time of the daughter's marriage, the absence of rights on the part of the woman in the agnatic group of her husband, as well as the very origin of the dowry in the returned part of the kalym, render completely natural the rule of Yakut customary law, whereby the woman is not the owner of her dowry. The latter, writes Mr. Pripuzov, "is completely at the disposal of the husband." The husband is the owner of his wife's dowry; he answers to no one for his squandering of it. A logical consequence of this order of things are the following rules, noted by Mr. Pripuzov, in the Yakutsk district: 1. In the case of the death of the wife the dowry is not returned, but passes to the husband and his children. 2. In the case of the death of the husband, if the couple had no children of the male sex, the wife can take her dowry and return to her parents. But she can only have the dowry back under the condtition that her husband made a disposition in that sense before his death: in its absence, the dowry, as a part of the familial-clan property, passes to the closest relatives of the deceased, and the wife has no right to claim it back from the heirs.

over land), thereby sustaining the fiction of community of clan interests. 575
A poor kinsman used to call a toyon who had robbed him of his posses- 614
sions aga (father), and was expected to look upon him as his "benefactor."

Family Customs

The primary unit in the social structure of the Yakuts had long been 594
the family (kergen or yal), which consisted of husband, wife and children, sometimes with the inclusion of other relatives living in the same house. The married sons were usually regarded as a separate household. The [595]
family was monogamous, but not too long ago (at the beginning of the 19th century) polygamy also existed among the wealthier section of the population, although the number of wives did not usually exceed two or three. In such cases the wives lived apart, each one running a separate household; the Yakuts explained this custom as a convenient way of looking after the livestock, which were distributed among several wives.

Marriage was preceded, sometimes for a long interval, by matchmaking. 584
There were also traces of exogamy (known from the 17th-century docu- [582]
ments); until quite late, males tried to pick their wives from a different clan, while the richer people, not satisfied with this, sought their brides as far as possible in other nasleg s or even other ulusy. Having selected the bride, the groom or his parents sent their relatives as matchmakers. The latter, using special ceremonies and conventional language, sought to obtain the consent of the future bride's parents to the marriage, and on the extent of the bride-price (khalyym, or suluu). The consent of the girl herself was not asked at all in the old days. The bride-price 583
consisted of livestock, but the extent of it varied considerably, from one or two to many dozen head; the bride-price always included the meat of a slaughtered beast. At the end of the 19th century there was a strong trend towards taking the bride payment in actual money. Some of the payment (kurum) was spent on the wedding feast (in the 17th-century documents, the word kurum sometimes meant the bride payment as a whole). The payment was considered compulsory, and a girl who married without it considered herself dishonored. The suitor was assisted by relatives, 584
sometimes even by distant kinsmen, in arranging the payment, thus showing the ancient view of a wedding as an all-clan affair. The relatives of the bride also took part in distributing the payment obtained. On his side, the suitor received a dowry (enn'e), partly in livestock and meat, but more often in clothing and utensils; the value of the dowry averaged half the value of the bride-price.

The clan also played an important part in the actual wedding ceremony, 585
which was attended by a large number of guests, relatives of the bride and groom, neighbors and so on. The festivities lasted several days and consisted of extensive feasting, different rituals and amusements, games, dancing, and so on. Not only did the bride and groom refrain from occupying the central place in all this festivity, they hardly took part at all.

In similar fashion to the wedding ceremony, the kinship terminology 601
has also retained traces of the earlier forms of marriage. The name for the son—uol—actually means boy or youth; the word for daughter—kyys—means girl or little girl; father is *aγa* (literally, "older"); wife is oyokh, but in some places the wife is simply called d'akhtar (woman), emeekhsin ("old woman") and so on; the husband is er, the older brother is ubay (bii), the younger brother is ini; the elder sister is ed'iy (agas) and the younger sister is balys. The last four terms are also used to denote uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, and other relatives. Generally speaking,

233 starvation. In June the reindeer has already become noticeably
492 fatter. In autumn and winter the natives harness mostly female reindeer; in the spring they ride exclusively on bucks, protecting the cows which are with calf. The natives said that not so long ago they made a practice of not harnessing the mares to the sleds beginning about ten days after the mare had copulated with a buck, in order to avoid miscarriages.

If a reindeer collapses from hunger while being ridden, in order to force him to go on the natives knead him in the stomach with their fists, and if this is of no avail, they cut off one of his ears.

3.

233 The reindeer, which is an object of private property, is marked
422 by each owner with a particular sign called the belie. The most reliable markings are considered to be figures made by making cuts in the ears of the animal, without making any distinction between the right and left ear; these ear cuts have different appellations depending on their form [Fig. 17]. Independently of the markings on the ears, the natives cut signs with a knife in the form of different combinations of lines in the hair on the sides of the reindeer [Fig. 18]. They do this in the month of the spring sunrise, after the polar night--the time of severe cold--has passed, in order that the reindeer may not get frostbitten in the places where the hair has been cut off. The signs of ownership are the same both for bucks and for mares. Cult signs, as among the Tavgi, are not found among the
233 Dolgan. When the children of a family grow up and are given part
428 of the reindeer herd for their own, the old markings are left on the grown reindeer, and the new markings are put only on the offspring. The youngest son, who is the last in line to receive the family
[583] wealth, receives his father's markings by inheritance. The markings
233 of the husband are put on reindeer which are received as part of a
422 dowry. When an owner buys another reindeer he cuts his own markings into its ears, and one may often see reindeer with several markings in their ears. It must be added that when an owner has a large herd not all the reindeer are marked with the signs of ownership. The Dolgan have an amazing ability [Facing 198: Figure 16 on an unpaginated insert] [199] to recognize their own reindeer even after several years have passed, and even when the reindeer were only calves when last seen. Rich reindeer breeders often have more reindeer in their herds than they can count, but if they see one of their own reindeer in someone else's herd they recognize it at once, even if it has no markings; at the same time they are unable to say which